Economic Cooperation Business Travel Cards, and for other purposes.

S. 2902

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. AKAKA), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VOINOVICH) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. BROWN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2902, a bill to improve the Federal Acquisition Institute.

S. 2942

At the request of Mr. PRYOR, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2942, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to establish a nanotechnology program.

S. 3078

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3078, a bill to provide for the establishment of a Health Insurance Rate Authority to establish limits on premium rating, and for other purposes.

S. 3260

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3260, a bill to enhance and further research into the prevention and treatment of eating disorders, to improve access to treatment of eating disorders, and for other purposes.

S. 3320

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3320, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for a Pancreatic Cancer Initiative, and for other purposes.

S. 3466

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3466, a bill to require restitution for victims of criminal violations of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, and for other purposes.

S. 3621

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3621, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for an exclusion for assistance provided to participants in certain veterinary student loan repayment or forgiveness programs.

S. 3622

At the request of Mr. JOHANNS, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3622, a bill to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to finalize a proposed rule to amend the spill prevention, control, and countermeasure rule to tailor and streamline the requirements for the dairy industry, and for other purposes.

S. 3628

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3628, a bill to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to prohibit foreign influence in Federal elections, to prohibit government contractors from making expenditures with respect to such elections, and to establish additional disclosure requirements with respect to spending in such elections, and for other purposes.

S. 3640

At the request of Mr. UDALL of Colorado, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3640, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the limitations on the amount excluded from the gross estate with respect to land subject to a qualified conservation easement.

S. 3642

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3642, a bill to ensure that the underwriting standards of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac facilitate the use of property assessed clean energy programs to finance the installation of renewable energy and energy efficiency improvements.

S. 3643

At the request of Mr. MCCONNELL, the names of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Texas (Mrs. HUTCHISON) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 3643, a bill to amend the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act to reform the management of energy and mineral resources on the Outer Continental Shelf, to improve oil spill compensation, to terminate the moratorium on deepwater drilling, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 555

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the names of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 555, a resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month.

AMENDMENT NO. 4471

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BOND) and the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 4471 intended to be proposed to H.R. 5297, an act to create the Small Business Lending Fund Program to direct the Secretary of the Treasury to make capital investments in eligible institutions in order to increase the availability of credit for small businesses, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax incentives for small business job creation, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. THUNE:

S. 3652. A bill to provide for comprehensive budget reform in order to increase transparency and reduce the deficit.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, we have been bombarded with some pretty big numbers lately. Our total national debt recently topped $13 trillion. In 5 years, it is expected to pass $20 trillion. This fiscal year alone, the Federal Government plans to run a deficit of $1.4 trillion. In other words, we are borrowing 41 cents out of every $1 we spend.

The numbers are mind blowing. We cannot even wrap our heads around the immensity of these numbers that run into the trillions. But they should be a very big red flag indicating that something—something—has gone very wrong here in Washington.

The American people are struggling with high unemployment and a difficult economy, trying to make ends meet. The American Government—their government—ought to be doing what it can to balance its own budget, not spending like drunken sailors in a way that will put the future of many American families at risk.

I hear it in my State. I know most of my colleagues do. I hear it as I drive around the country. There is a palpable fear that this enormous burden of debt is going to crush us.

The Federal budget for 2010 is already 24 percent higher than it was in 2008. How many families are able to increase their spending by 24 percent over a 2-year period? Congress has to realize what the American people already know: Our current rate of spending is unsustainable. There is an old saying that if the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to see everything as a nail. Well, this administration and the Democratic leadership of Congress seem to think the only tool they have is a checkbook and every problem can be solved with more money.

But all of this reckless spending is not solving the problems it was meant to solve. If you recall, the trillion dollar stimulus was supposed to create jobs and get the economy growing again. Unfortunately, it has not worked that way.

Look at the latest jobs report for last month. We actually lost 125,000 total jobs across the country. Where I come from, that is known as heading in the wrong direction. Look as the massive health care law passed earlier this year. When the other side was jamming this bill through the Senate, they said, even though it would cost $2.5 trillion, it would actually bring down—down—our spending on health care and lower the deficit over time.

In the past few weeks, however, we have gotten new estimates that the law will cost billions more than was thought a few months ago. On top of that, health care spending is expected to rise even faster as a result of the law than if we had done nothing at all.

Time after time after time that is what we have seen: more spending, more debt, and a bill we will hand to

our children—all because we cannot live within our means and we refuse to make the tough choices we were elected to make.

The irresponsible spending and borrowing that is making our mountain of debt bigger every day has to stop. Today, I am introducing a bill entitled the Deficit Reduction and Budget Reform Act that will take the first steps toward reining in our spending. It is high time we show the American taxpayers we are responsible stewards not just of their tax dollars but of the future of this country.

The goal here is to reform the budget process and to reduce our structural deficits so we will live within our means. My proposal is a three-legged stool that aims to support our country and economy while reducing the burden our rapidly expanding government places on American families and businesses.

The first proposal is to create a new standing joint committee of Congress for budget deficit reduction. The committee would be required to put forward a plan to cut the deficit by 10 percent every budget cycle, and to do it without raising taxes. This would be Members of Congress—both parties—taking responsibility and not punting the job to outsiders.

This bill would then receive expedited consideration in both Chambers of Congress. We have 26 committees and subcommittees in Congress that are dedicated to spending tax dollars. We should have at least one dedicated to saving tax dollars.

Second, to make sure those changes have a better chance of success in practice, I am proposing additional reforms to the budget process. Crucially, we would reform pay-go rules to prevent the double counting of new revenues or reduced spending in trust funds for the purpose of offsetting other expenditures.

When pay-go rules were set up earlier this year, they allowed for these kinds of gimmicks that have been used over and over to subvert the budget responsibility the rules were meant to impose.

More than $600 billion in trust fund offsets was used to pass the health care reform bill, and an attempt was made to increase the per-barrel tax for the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund to offset other unrelated measures. By preventing these changes from being used as an offset under pay-go rules, this provision would end the practice of double counting these spending reductions and revenue increases.

Then we would add teeth to the budget by making it a binding joint resolution signed into law by the President. This would force the administration and Congress to work more closely together, and Congress would have less flexibility to violate the nonbinding resolutions we currently use.

My legislation would also establish a biennial budget timeline to give Congress more time for oversight and to determine whether our spending is doing what it is supposed to do.

I will simply point out that it seems to me the way we do the budget process currently is broken. In the last 34 years, I think there have been 4 times when all of the appropriations bills have been passed by the Congress on time, according to schedule. If you look at the number of budgets that have been passed here in the past few years, there have been a lot of years when we have not passed budgets at all.

It seems to me it would make sense—in an even-numbered year, when there is an election going to be held—that we ought to do oversight, that we ought to be looking at ways to save taxpayer money rather than spend taxpayer money. Then we could do the budget in the odd-numbered years, after an election, so we have an opportunity to do the appropriations bills and go through the budget process in the odd-numbered year, so when the even-numbered year comes around again we are not consumed with trying to spend money to attract some constituency to vote for us in an election year, but, rather, we are focused on oversight and on ways we could actually save the taxpayers money as opposed to spending it.

So a biennial budget process, budget timeline, is something this bill would also do. When Congress inevitably resorts to pork-barrel politics that inflates our budgets, we need a legislative line-item veto to allow the President to cut them out and to send a more responsible budget back to Congress for an up-or-down vote. Governors of most States, including my State of South Dakota, have some kind of a line-item veto. The President ought to have that power as well.

Third, on top of these vital systemic changes, we need to take control of the government's outrageous spending. My bill would impose a 10-year spending freeze to cap the Federal Government's discretionary spending at the level it was in fiscal year 2008, adjusted for inflation. I said earlier that between 2008 and 2010, Federal spending had increased 24 percent, at a time when inflation in this country was about 3.5 percent. If we take that baseline back to that 2008 level and index it for inflation every year for the next 10 years, we can save the taxpayers literally hundreds of billions of dollars.

Beyond that freeze, we should end the failed stimulus program and reclaim any money remaining unspent and unobligated and apply it to the Federal debt.

Those are not the only possible answers, and many are not new. Many of these are ideas my Republican colleagues and I have proposed and that we fought for in the past. We will keep fighting for them because they are the kinds of things we need to do to break the back of this budget problem we are fighting.

The government's current level of borrowing, this out-of-control spending, and this amount of taxation are too much for our economy and our taxpayers to bear. What may be even more troubling is the point that was made by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, ADM Mike Mullen. He said the biggest threat to our national security is our debt, not al-Qaida, not Iran's nuclear program, not Russian spies, but the debt Congress itself has created.

It does not have to be this way. My plan is a responsible approach that takes prudent but manageable steps to get our spending under control and to start to draw down our debt. It provides concrete savings of nearly a trillion dollars, and it puts in place a framework to help us save trillions more over time.

It is easy to say: I will be responsible tomorrow, but first I want to spend a little more today. Well, there will always be something that seems important to spend tax dollars on, and if we keep taking that same old approach that the other side has been pushing since they took control of Congress in 2007, we will be waiting for fiscal responsibility forever.

Tackling our outrageous national debt is not a priority we should put off until the long term, after the debt has gone up even higher and higher and higher than it is today. It needs to be a priority now.

I will also note that we cannot afford the old trick where the President calls for spending cuts in theory but then happily signs congressional spending bills that do not save a dime. We have to move beyond the same old political games and the same old phony rhetoric. We need real commitment to making a real difference.

There is another old saying that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. The President and the Democratic leadership of Congress want to keep doing the same thing over and over: borrowing money, spending too much, and then borrowing even more.

But thinking that somehow with all that borrowing and spending we will buy our way out of the hole we are in, that is insanity. In reality, all we are doing is digging ourselves deeper and deeper into debt.

I am going to conclude by urging my colleagues to take up this legislation I am introducing and to take that first crucial step to fiscal responsibility. The American people expect us to take our debt seriously, and it is high time we lived up to that expectation.

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Mr. FEINGOLD, and Mr. WEBB):

S. 3654. A bill to amend title 11 of the United States Code to include firearms in the type of property allowable under the alternative provision for exempting property from the estate; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today I introduce legislation to create an express exemption in the Federal Bankruptcy Code for personal firearms.

Given the place that firearms occupy in our culture for law-abiding Americans, I believe it makes sense for the Federal Bankruptcy Code to reflect these values. The Supreme Court has confirmed that the Second Amendment protects a fundamental right. I agree that the right protected by the Second Amendment is ''deeply rooted in this Nation's history and tradition.'' One needs to look no further than the woods of Vermont in the autumn to know this is true. Amending the Code to expressly include this exemption will not only allow more Americans to participate in these traditions, but will further the exercise of the Second Amendment right itself.

Under the Bankruptcy Code, debtors are permitted to exempt from the bankruptcy estate a wide variety of household goods and other personal effects. For example, a debtor using the Federal bankruptcy exemptions may exempt furniture, musical instruments, jewelry, and other household goods. The code defines ''household goods'' to include items such as linens, china, and a television or other entertainment equipment. All of this is subject to limitations on monetary value, which is important to ensure that the exemptions are not abused to the detriment of creditors. The code's list of exemptions is designed to permit a debtor to obtain a fresh start in such a way that he or she has the continued use of personal items that are both utilitarian and that add to the enjoyment of day to day life. I believe many Americans would place personal firearms squarely within both of these categories.

Several States have enacted specific bankruptcy exemptions for firearms in their State laws. The Federal exemption I propose would leave all of these state exemptions untouched and would only apply if a debtor affirmatively chose, where permitted, to use the Federal exemptions. The exemption is modeled on the work these states have done and takes a modest approach that will nonetheless be meaningful for someone using the Federal exemptions. This legislation would permit a debtor using the Federal exemptions to at least exempt one rifle, shotgun, or pistol, separately or in combination, with an aggregate value of $3,000.

For many Americans, a personal firearm—whether a hunting rifle, a family heirloom, or a firearm for self-protection—is an important possession. It is one that in many cases may have little significant monetary value to creditors. People own firearms for many lawful reasons. In many parts of the United States, hunting is an essential part of life. In others, people feel strongly about the need to own a firearm to help keep themselves and their families safe. For still others, firearms have deep historical or sentimental value. The Bankruptcy Code should reflect these values.

Our bankruptcy policy is intended to help those in severe financial difficulty regain financial health and repay what they owe to their creditors to the extent possible. And in encouraging and helping those in bankruptcy to make a new start we are right to do so in a way that allows room for the things that give our lives enjoyment and meaning. If the amendment made by this legislation makes it possible for a parent and child to continue a family hunting tradition or a person to retain a piece of family history passed down through generations to them, those are good things.

I hope all Senators will join me in supporting this legislation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 3654

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Protecting Gun Owners in Bankruptcy Act of 2010''.

SEC. 2. EXEMPTIONS.

Section 522 of title 11, the United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (d) by adding at the end the following:

''(13) The debtor's aggregate interest, not to exceed $3,000 in value, in a single rifle, shotgun, or pistol, or any combination thereof.''; and

(2) in subsection (f)(4)(A)—

(A) in clause (xiv), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(B) in clause (xv), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(xvi) the debtor's aggregate interest, not to exceed $3,000 in value, in a single rifle, shotgun, or pistol, or any combination thereof.''.

SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE; APPLICATION OF AMENDMENTS.

(a) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Except as provided in subsection (b), this Act and the amendments made by this Act shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(b) APPLICATION OF AMENDMENTS.—The amendments made by this Act shall apply only with respect to cases commenced under title 11, United States Code, on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

By Mrs. LINCOLN (for herself, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. BENNET, Mr. HARKIN, and Mr. ROBERTS):

S. 3656. A bill to amend the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 to improve the reporting on sales of livestock and dairy products, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I am pleased to be joined by my colleagues, Senators CHAMBLISS and GRASSLEY, to introduce legislation that would reauthorize mandatory price reporting for another 5 years. This bill will guarantee transparency of the livestock marketing sector and help improve producers' timely access to market prices so that they can make the best decision on when to sell the livestock they have worked hard to bring to market.

To address producers' concerns regarding low livestock prices, industry concentration, and the unavailability of accurate market information, Congress passed the Livestock Mandatory Reporting Act in 1999 to help improve market transparency.

Producers tell me that Mandatory Price Reporting yields valuable information, helps to keep the markets honest, and helps take the guess work out of business decisions for producers and packers.

This legislation, which is supported by producers and packers alike, will extend for an additional 5 years the reporting requirements of livestock daily markets. This bill makes two important changes from existing law.

First, as specified in the 2008 Farm Bill, this bill will require Mandatory Reporting of Wholesale Pork, MRWP, cuts. A study on MRWP, required by the 2008 Farm Bill and published earlier this year, will help guide the new regulations. This legislation also included negotiated rule making that requires the Secretary of Agriculture to bring stakeholders, as well as representatives from industry and the Department of Agriculture together to design the regulations for reporting MRWP cuts. The bill requires that a final rule be completed no later than 18 months after it is signed by the President. This important addition, once completed, would simply expand transparency to the pork industry that was not previously required and further protect producers.

Second, the bill instructs the Secretary of Agriculture to establish within 1 year an electronic price reporting system for dairy products. Published reports will be required on a weekly and monthly basis. This is a first critical step in continuing to assist our producers as they make decisions that impact their businesses. Furthermore, on a weekly basis, the Secretary of Agriculture must publish a report disclosing milk prices from the previous week. This too was included in the Farm Bill, and I am hopeful it will be another tool for dairy farmers across the country.

This bill represents several months of negotiations by all interested stakeholders who worked hard to find compromise on these critical issues. I want to thank everyone involved in this process for working together to reach consensus. Those groups supporting the reauthorization bill include:

American Farm Bureau Federation, American Meat Institute, American Sheep Industry Association, National Cattlemen's Beef Association, National Farmers Union, National Pork Producers Council, National Meat Association, and the United States Cattleman's Association.

I look forward to moving this critical reauthorization through Congress so we do not disrupt the critical reporting

on livestock markets and so that family farmers and ranchers in Arkansas can have confidence that they are receiving fair market value.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a letter of support be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

JULY 9, 2010.

Hon. BLANCHE LINCOLN,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture, U.S. Senate, Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.

Hon. SAXBY CHAMBLISS,
Ranking Minority Member, Committee on Agriculture, U.S. Senate, Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN LINCOLN AND RANKING MEMBER CHAMBLISS: We, the undersigned organizations, are writing to request that the Senate Agriculture Committee work with relevant stakeholders in the livestock industry to reauthorize for a period of five (5) years the Livestock Mandatory Price Reporting provisions contained in the 2006 Livestock Mandatory Reauthorization Act (P.L. 109–296).

The original 1999 Livestock Mandatory Price Reporting Act was a culmination of many hours of negotiations among industry participants and required packers to report, among other things, livestock purchase prices to the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service. Livestock producers and processors continue to need a transparent, accurate and timely market price reporting system to make informed business decisions. Mandatory price reporting makes markets more transparent and offers new market information with regard to pricing, contracting for purchase and supply and demand conditions for cattle, hogs and sheep. During the 109th Congress, the Mandatory Price Reporting provisions were reauthorized until September 30, 2010.

The U.S. pork industry supports the inclusion in this reauthorization of two new pork industry-specific provisions. We believe these consensus recommendations will increase and improve the transparency of the Livestock Mandatory Price Reporting system. We recommend that the following consensus provisions be included:

1. Reporting of wholesale pork cuts. Require USDA to enter a negotiated rulemaking process to develop this system.

2. Reporting on a weekly basis of pork exports. These exports should be added to the list of commodities that are required to be reported to the Secretary of Agriculture. Information reported should include any contract for export sales entered into during the reporting period.

These proposed provisions are part of a carefully balanced consensus legislative package reached by interested stakeholders over a long period of negotiation and discussion representing all segments of the industry. We support the consensus legislative package, including the new pork reporting provisions, with the collective goal that mandatory price reporting will be enacted before September 30, 2010.

We recognize that the Committee has a full slate of legislative business ahead, and we urge expeditious action to reauthorize the Act for a period of five years with these industry consensus recommendations. We look forward to working with the Senate Agriculture Committee on this important issue to America's livestock industry.

Sincerely,

AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION,
AMERICAN MEAT INSTITUTE,
AMERICAN SHEEP INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION,
NATIONAL CATTLEMEN'S BEEF ASSOCIATION,
NATIONAL FARMERS UNION,
NATIONAL PORK PRODUCERS COUNCIL,
NATIONAL MEAT ASSOCIATION,
UNITED STATES CATTLEMAN'S ASSOCIATION.

By Mr. UDALL of Colorado (for himself, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BEGICH, Mrs. SHAHEEN, and Mr. CASEY):

S. 3658. A bill to provide professional development for elementary school principals in early childhood education and development; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, today I am introducing, along with Senators MICHAEL BENNET, MARK BEGICH, BOB CASEY, and JEANNE SHAHEEN, legislation to support elementary school principals and help prepare America's children for a successful education. Our bill would provide grant funds to train elementary school principals on how best to bridge the gap between early childhood development programs and elementary school learning.

Oftentimes for elementary school principals, the competing demands of running a school, without the proper training or experience, can crowd out successful partnerships with early childhood learning programs. This can lead to an assortment of educational approaches and, on a practical level, disjointed efforts to ensure students receive a continuum of learning.

The aim of my bill is to provide elementary school principals with the ability to take research-based, early childhood development practices and incorporate those skills into their schools in order to better prepare our Nation's youth for success. As part of this effort, our House colleagues, Congressmen ALTMIRE and HIMES, will be introducing a companion version to this legislation in their chamber.

As we all know, a child's education does not begin on that first day of kindergarten; rather, it begins much earlier in life as an infant's brain develops and cognitive skills are acquired through daily interaction with parents, grandparents, siblings, and other caregivers. As a parent, I remember firsthand the interactions I had with my two children during their infant years. When the time came, my wife and I knew that our children were prepared for pre-school, where they would acquire additional skills to further prepare them for their K–3 years. We wanted them to be ready to learn on day one.

My story is similar to the stories of millions of American parents who do what they can to ensure their children are fully prepared for that first day of kindergarten. While there are many different early learning settings, whether through the Head Start or other programs, we can all agree that ensuring our children are school-ready is an admirable goal.

As the research suggests, children who participate in early learning programs often perform better upon entering elementary school than their peers who do not. In order to build on that success and do right by our children by giving them the best chance to succeed when they begin kindergarten, our bill will help train principals on how to establish relationships with early childhood learning providers and collaborate to ensure they are on the same page when it comes to a child's development.

Building this pathway and ensuring a close connection between these two critical educational settings, especially for principals early in their careers, is a common-sense way to build better learning environments for our children. Our legislation has the support of the National Association of Elementary School Principals and a host of early learning advocacy organizations. I urge my colleagues to support this important effort.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 3659. A bill to reauthorize certain port security programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise to introduce the SAFE Port Reauthorization Act of 2010. This bill extends important programs that protect our nation's critical shipping lanes and seaports from attack and sabotage.

The SAFE Port Reauthorization Act of 2010 is co-sponsored by my colleague, Senator MURRAY. Senator MURRAY and I drafted the original SAFE Port Act in 2005, leading to its enactment in 2006. I am pleased that she has again joined me to extend and strengthen this important law. Several stakeholders have expressed their support for our efforts, including the American Association of Port Authorities, the National Retail Federation, and the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators.

The scope of what we need to protect is broad. America has 361 seaports—each vital links in our Nation's transportation network. Our seaports move more than 95 percent of overseas trade. In 2009, U.S. ports logged 68,000 ports-of-call by foreign-flagged vessels, bringing 9.8 million shipping containers to our shores.

The largest 21 ports handle 98 percent of the shipping container traffic. Indeed, nearly 60 percent of all containership calls are made in just three States—California, New York, and Georgia—but this container traffic arrives at many points across the United States, from Maine to Hawaii.

Coming from a State with three international cargo ports—including

Portland, the largest port by tonnage in New England—I am keenly aware of the importance of seaports to our national economy and to the communities in which they are located.

Because seaports are flourishing, our harbors operate as vital centers of economic activity; they also represent vulnerable targets. Shipping containers are a special source of concern.

A single obscure container, hidden among a ship's cargo of several hundred containers, could be used to hide a squad of terrorists or a dirty bomb. In other words, a container could be turned into a 21st-Century Trojan horse.

The shipping container's security vulnerabilities are so well known that it has also been called ''the poor man's missile,'' because for only a few thousand dollars, a terrorist could ship one across the Atlantic or the Pacific to a U.S. port.

The contents of such a container don't have to be something as complex as a nuclear or biological weapon. As former Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Robert Bonner told The New York Times, a single container packed with readily available ammonium sulfate fertilizer and a detonation system could produce ten times the blast that destroyed the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City.

Whatever the type of weapon, an attack on one or more U.S. ports could cause great loss of life and large numbers of injuries; it could damage our energy supplies and infrastructure; it could cripple retailers and manufacturers dependent on incoming inventory; and it could hamper our ability to move and supply American military forces fighting against the forces of terrorism.

I have had the opportunity to visit seaports across the country and, as one looks at some of the nation's busiest harbors, one sees what a terrorist might call ''high-value targets.'' Ferries move thousands of people daily. Large and sprawling urban populations are situated around the ports. At some locations, there are large sports stadiums nearby as well.

Add up those factors and one realizes immediately the death and destruction that a ship carrying a container hiding a weapon of mass destruction could inflict at a single port.

Of course, a port can be a conduit for an attack as well as a target. A container with dangerous cargo could be loaded on a truck or rail car, or have its contents unpacked at the port and distributed to support attacks elsewhere. In 2008, we saw that the port in Mumbai, India, offered the means for a gang of terrorists to launch an attack on a section of the city's downtown. That attack killed more than 170 people and wounded hundreds more.

To address these security threats, our bill would reauthorize the SAFE Port Act cargo security programs that have proven to be successful: the Automated Targeting System that identifies high-risk cargo; the Container Security Initiative that ensures high-risk cargo containers are inspected at ports overseas before they travel to the United States; and the Customs–Trade Partnership Against Terrorism, or C–TPAT, that provides incentives to importers to enhance the security of their cargo from point of origin to destination.

The bill would also strengthen the C–TPAT program by providing new benefits, including voluntary security training to industry participants and providing participants an information sharing mechanism on maritime and port security threats, and by authorizing Customs and Border Protection to conduct unannounced inspections to ensure that security practices are robust. The cooperation of private industry is vital to protecting supply chains, and C–TPAT is a necessary tool for securing their active cooperation in supply chain security efforts.

The bill also would extend the competitive, risk-based, port security grants that have provided $1.5 billion to improve the security of our ports. An authorization for the next 5 years at $400 million per year is a continued major commitment of resources, but it is fully proportional to what is at stake, and a priority that we cannot ignore.

In addition to continuing and strengthening critical programs, the bill also would expand the America's Waterway Watch Program to promote voluntary reporting of suspected terrorist activity or suspicious behavior against a vessel, facility, port, or waterway. While the program has proven valuable in ports throughout the country, the legislation would broaden its scope and increase public awareness through boating education and industry stakeholder meetings coordinated by the Coast Guard and its Reserve and Auxiliary components. The America's Waterway Watch Program has received strong endorsements from numerous professional boating associations for the enhanced situational awareness it will bring to our nation's ports and waterways.

Our bill would protect citizens from frivolous lawsuits when they report, in good faith, suspicious behavior that may indicate terrorist activity against the United States. It builds on a provision from the 2007 homeland security law that encourages people to report potential terrorist threats directed against transportation systems by protecting people from those who would misuse our legal system in an attempt to chill the willingness of citizens to come forward and report possible dangers.

In addition, this legislation enhances the research and development efforts to improve maritime cargo security. The demonstration project authorized by this law would study the feasibility of using composite materials in cargo containers to improve container integrity and deploy next generation sensors.

This legislation also addresses the difficulties in administering the mandate of x-raying and scanning for radiation all cargo containers overseas that are destined for the United States by July 2012. Until x-ray scanning technology is proven effective at detecting radiological material and not disruptive of trade, requiring the x-raying of all U.S. bound cargo, regardless of its risk, at every foreign port, is misguided and provides a false sense of security. It would also impose onerous restrictions on the flow of commerce, costing billions with little additional security benefit.

Under the original provisions of the SAFE Port Act, all cargo designated as high-risk at foreign ports is already scanned for radiation and x-rayed. In addition, cargo entering the U.S. at all major seaports is scanned for radiation. These security measures currently in place are part of a layered, risk-based method to ensure cargo entering the U.S. is safe.

This legislation would eliminate the deadline for 100 percent x-raying of containers if the Secretary of Homeland Security certifies the effectiveness of individual security measures of that layered security approach. This is a more reasonable method to secure our cargo until a new method of x-raying containers is proven effective.

The SAFE Port Reauthorization Act of 2010 will help us to continue an effective, layered, coordinated security system that extends from point of origin to point of destination, and that covers the people, the vessels, the cargo, and the facilities involved in our maritime commerce. It will continue to address a major vulnerability in our homeland security critical infrastructure while preserving the flow of goods on which our economy depends.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 595—DESIGNATING THE WEEK BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 12, 2010, AS ''NATIONAL HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES WEEK''

Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. BAYH, Mr. BOND, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. BUNNING, Mr. BURR, Mr. BURRIS, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. COBURN, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. CORKER, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. DEMINT, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. HAGAN, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. KAUFMAN, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. LEMIEUX, Mr. LEVIN, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. MCCAIN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. VITTER, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. WARNER, Mr. WEBB, and Mr. WICKER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to: